

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 79 and 84-314 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Please AMEND claims 41, 47, 63, 64, 68, 73, 75 and 77 as follows:

1-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces and approximately centrally located along said at least one of said bearing surfaces, said flange having a length extending along said at least one of said bearing surface surfaces and a width tapering ~~along at least a portion of said length~~ in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length.

42. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 41, wherein said tapering width of said flange facilitates wedging engagement of said flange within a preformed opening defined in a corresponding one of the first and second vertebrae.

43. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 42, wherein said flange has a leading insertion end defining a beveled edge to facilitate insertion of said flange into said preformed opening.

44. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 41, wherein said flange has a leading insertion end and a trailing end, said width tapering outwardly from said leading end toward said trailing end.

45. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 41, further comprising a bone-growth promoting substance to facilitate bone growth with said flange.

46. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 45, wherein said flange is coated with said bone-growth promoting substance to facilitate bone on-growth.

47. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces, said flange having a length extending along said at least one of said bearing surface surfaces and a width tapering in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length, and wherein said flange defines at least one opening extending therethrough to permit bone through-growth.

48. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 41, wherein at least one of said flange projects from each of said first and second bearing surfaces.

49. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 41, further comprising a first articular surface arranged generally opposite said first bearing surface and a second articular surface arranged generally opposite said second bearing surface, said first and second articular surfaces cooperating to provide articulating motion.

50. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 49, wherein at least one of said first and second articular surfaces includes at least one surface depression configured to facilitate removal of matter disposed between abutting portions of said first and second articular surfaces.

51-61. (Cancelled)

62. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 63, wherein each of said first and second flanges has a length extending along said at least one bearing surface, said width tapering in a direction along at least a portion of said length.

63. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a first flange projecting from said first bearing surface, said first flange having a first length extending along said first bearing surface;

a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra;
a second flange projecting from said second bearing surface, said second flange having a second length extending along said second bearing surface; and

wherein each of said first and second flanges has a tapering width in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said first and second lengths, respectively, and defines at least one opening extending therethrough to permit bone through-growth.

64. (Currently Amended) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 63, further comprising a bone-growth promoting substance to facilitate bone growth with said ~~flange~~ first and second flanges.

65. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 63, further comprising a first articular surface arranged generally opposite said first bearing surface and a second articular surface arranged generally opposite said second bearing surface, said first and second articular surfaces cooperating to provide articulating motion, at least one of said first and second articular surfaces including at least one surface depression configured to facilitate removal of matter disposed between abutting portions of said first and second articular surfaces.

66-67. (Cancelled)

68. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces and defining, at least one opening extending through said flange to permit bone through-growth, said flange having a length extending along said at least one of said bearing surfaces and a width tapering in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length.

69. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 68, wherein said flange defines a plurality of said at least one opening.

70. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 68, wherein at least a portion of said flange is coated with a bone-growth promoting substance to facilitate bone growth with said flange.

71. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 68, wherein at least one of said flange projects from each of said first and second bearing surfaces.

72. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 68, further comprising a first articular surface arranged generally opposite said first bearing surface and a second articular surface arranged generally opposite said second bearing surface, said first and second articular surfaces cooperating to provide articulating motion.

73. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces and extending along at least about one half of said at least one of said bearing surfaces in a direction other than an anterior-posterior direction when the intervertebral prosthetic joint is inserted between the first and second vertebrae, said flange having a length extending along said at least one of said

bearing surfaces and a width tapering in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length.

74. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 73, wherein said flange extends in a lateral direction when the intervertebral prosthetic joint is inserted between the first and second vertebrae.

75. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces and extending in a direction other than an anterior-posterior direction when the intervertebral prosthetic joint is inserted between the first and second vertebrae, said flange defining at least one opening extending therethrough to permit bone growth through said flange and having a length extending along said at least one of said bearing surfaces and a width tapering in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length.

76. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 73, further comprising a first articular surface arranged generally opposite said first bearing surface and a second articular surface arranged generally opposite said second bearing surface, said first and second articular surfaces cooperating to provide articulating motion.

77. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral prosthetic joint, comprising:
a first bearing surface adapted to engage a first vertebra;
a second bearing surface adapted to engage a second vertebra; and
a flange projecting from at least one of said bearing surfaces and adapted for positioning in a slot formed in one of the first and second vertebrae, said flange defining at least one opening extending therethrough and having a length extending along said at least one of said bearing surfaces and a width tapering in a direction parallel to said at least one of said bearing surfaces along at least a portion of said length; and

a bone screw ~~engaged~~ engageable between the intervertebral prosthetic joint and one of the first and second vertebrae to resist displacement of the intervertebral prosthetic joint.

78. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 77, wherein said at least one opening permits bone growth through said flange.

79. (Cancelled)

80. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 77, further comprising a first articular surface arranged generally opposite said first bearing surface and a second articular surface arranged generally opposite said second bearing surface, said first and second articular surfaces cooperating to provide articulating motion.

81. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 73, wherein said flange extends substantially entirely along said at least one of said bearing surfaces.

82. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 73, wherein said flange is approximately centrally located along said at least one of said bearing surfaces.

83. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral prosthetic joint of claim 77, wherein said flange is approximately centrally located along said at least one of said bearing surfaces.

84-314.(Cancelled)